

## REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 7, 2003 (Paper No. 6). Claims 19 to 26 are in the application, of which Claims 19 and 26 are the independent claims. Claims 19 to 23, 25 and 26 read on the elected species. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

An objection was lodged against the drawings, based on language found in Claim 12, and Claims 12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. It is believed that this objection and rejection were entered improvidently, since the language of Claim 12 very clearly specifies that there are separate liquid absorbing members. Nevertheless, in view of the cancellation of Claims 12 and 14, withdrawal of this objection and rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 12 and 14 to 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and Claims 1 to 11 and 15 to 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). These claims have all been cancelled, and new Claims 19 to 26 substituted therefor. Cancellation of the original claims is made without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejection. New Claims 19 to 26 are believed to define patentable subject matter, for at least the following reasons.

The claims concern a storing structure for storing an ink jet head, in which the ink jet head comprises a nozzle for discharging liquid, a liquid storing portion for storing liquid to be supplied to the nozzle, and a liquid introduction portion for introducing the liquid in the liquid storing portion from an exterior thereof. The liquid storing portion

is divided into a first chamber communicated with a nozzle and a second chamber communicated with the liquid introduction portion by a filter, and the liquid introduction portion is provided with an elastic member having a slit.

The storing structure comprises a storing container having a container member and a lid member to contain the ink jet head, and a cap for covering a nozzle face of the ink jet head in a non-contact state relative to the nozzle face.

According to one aspect of the invention, ink not including a color material is contained in the nozzle of the ink jet head, and air is present in an area other than the nozzle. Thus, the ink jet head is stored in a state where the nozzle portion of the head is filled with ink, whereas other portions are filled with air. According to this arrangement, the slit functions to adjust a pressure inside the head, and the ink stored in the nozzle is unlikely to leak even in a situation where internal pressure is changed due to an environmental change such as temperature.

By contrast, the ink jet head described at pages 1 through 5 of the subject specification is provided with a nozzle and a subtank, where the head is filled with ink and is capped. Likewise, Terasawa (U.S. Patent 6,097,407) discloses a storing structure for a cartridge having a head and an ink tank integrated thereto; but Terasawa's arrangement shows ink filled in both the ink tank and the whole of the ink jet head.

Accordingly, any permissible combination of Terasawa with the ink jet head described at pages 1 through 5 of the subject specification would yield nothing more than a storing structure in which a nozzle portion covers a cap in a condition that the nozzle portion and a liquid storing portion are filled with ink. Such a combination would fail to

disclosure or suggest a storing structure of the invention wherein ink is contained in a nozzle portion of the ink jet head, and air is present in areas other than the nozzle portion. Because of this deficiency, the proposed combination also suffers from the disadvantage that, if an internal pressure is changed due to an environmental change such as temperature, a pressure of ink in the head is adjusted, and ink leakage from the nozzle is possible.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the claims herein are fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 32622

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO  
30 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, New York 10112-2200  
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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